





HISTORY  
OF THE  
AMERICAN COLONY  
IN  
**LIBERIA,**

FROM DECEMBER 1821 TO 1825

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BY J. ASHMUN.

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*Compiled from the Authentic Records of the Colony.*

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**A MEMOIR**  
**Of the Exertions and Sufferings of the**  
**American Colonists,**

CONNECTED WITH THE OCCUPATION OF CAPE MONTSERADO :  
EMBRACING THE PARTICULAR HISTORY OF THE  
COLONY OF LIBERIA FROM DECEMBER  
1821 TO 1823.

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NOTHING among men is great or small, but relatively. Human pride seldom indeed remembers this axiom in the estimate it forms of the moral worth of virtuous actions. And experience proves that the heart itself too easily obeys the absurd prejudice; withholding the tribute of its sensibilities from the loveliest examples of unobtrusive, solitary merit, and lavishing it with a forced prodigality on such instances as in some way connect with themselves the accidental, not to say doubtful, circumstance of a mere physical magnificence. Separate the pursuits of mankind from the considerations of morality, and their distinctions of great and small, will be seen to be as arbitrary and capricious as the fancies and habits of individuals.

I have seen the well-repressed smile of conscious derision cautiously sporting itself on the composed features of a Senator of one of the small republics of America, while amusing his leisure with the little intrigues of a borough election. I saw something like a reflection of the same playful sentiment radiating from the relaxed brow of a minister of the national council, while attending to a grave argument of the same Senator on a contested point of county jurisdiction. The delegate who figures in an European Congress, might affect to regard as cheap and rude the politics of the entire western world. And the most magnificent political manœuvres of modern times, what are they, if magnitude is made the scale of greatness, in comparison with the profound and awful policy of Rome—beginning in the darkness of a remote antiquity, and holding its even and mighty course over the ruins of thirty gene-

rations, unchanged even by domestic revolutions, until its proud consummation was, under the Cesars, triumphantly developed in the reduction of the world?

The truth is, that the intrinsic grandeur of all human actions consists wholly in their moral character; and it is the share which the virtuous heart takes in those actions, that after all, is the just measure of their greatness. It is this principle of estimation alone, which puts it in the power of the humblest part of mankind to equal in real magnanimity of character, and absolute grandeur of exploit, the achievements, and the moral elevation, of the proudest. It is this scale of distribution, by which the benevolent Father of mankind, divides to all the race, the little stock of their joys and sorrows.—I will add, too, that the first secret of a virtuous mind is folded up in its wisdom to discern, and disposition to applaud, amidst those gilded heaps of splendid trifles which continually solicit the admiration of the world, the genuine traits of moral greatness in their least imposing forms.

It is in the beautiful light of a theory so just, and at the same time so gratifying to the benevolent heart, that many of the readers of the following memoir will delight to contemplate the genuine actings of heroic virtue; of which the theatre was too remote from the observation of the world, and the actors too little practised in the arts of ostentation, to expose their motives to the suspicion of vanity, or admit of the agency of the ordinary stimulants of great achievements.

To arrive at the remote spot on which these humble scenes were transacted, I must tax the reader's imagination with a flight across the Atlantic ocean, which, by limiting the circle of his ordinary avocations, may hitherto have bounded the range of his liveliest sensibilities. I must send it far from the polished and populous districts of European, and Asian refinement—beyond the habitations of civilized man—to the least frequented recess of a coast almost the least frequented on the globe. On this spot, a handful of coloured emigrants from the United States, in whose bosoms the examples of history had never kindled the fire of emulation—whose only philosophy had been acquired from a series of dispiriting conflicts with every form of physical and moral adversity—and whose prospects, at that moment, were as dark and appalling, as the memory of the past was embittered—ejected from the land of their birth,—hostility, famine and destruction mena-

cing them in that of their adoption : such is the humble character of the individuals, and equally humble is the scenery and the action, which are to enliven the incidents of this narrative.

The facts are wholly drawn from the authentic records of Liberia ; and doubtless deserve the connected exposition which is intended here to be presented, as forming the only minute history yet published, of the first and most interesting period of that promising Colony. The compiler having enjoyed the humble honour of directing the little phalanx of moral energies so advantageously, and through the sustaining providence of Heaven, so triumphantly displayed, in the trying scenes of 1822, hesitates not to acknowledge that to the performance of this little task, he is equally prompted by a sentiment of grateful pride, and the more exacting obligations of a serious duty. The circumstances, some of them not of the most pleasant nature, which give its principal strength to this latter motive, it is entirely needless farther to advert to; and to most of his readers, the writer owes an apology even for this slight digression.

The map which accompanies this statement, is wholly constructed from surveys of which the events detailed in it furnished the compiler with the occasion; and is believed to be quite sufficient to elucidate all the local references.

The territory on which the first settlement of the colonists of Liberia has been made, may be seen to present the form of a narrow tongue, of twelve leagues' extent, detached from the main land, except by a narrow Isthmus, formed by the approach of the head waters of the Montserado and Junk rivers. The northwestern termination of this linear tract of country is cape Montserado, which, towards its extremity, rises to a promontory sufficiently majestic to present a bold distinction from the uniform level of the coast. Towards the south-east it is terminated by the mouth of the Junk river. Centrally, this peninsula is attached to the main land by the Isthmus just designated ; so as to represent the general form of a scale-beam, of which, the point of attachment answers to the pivot.—and measured directly over from the banks of the Junk, or Montserado river, to the ocean, its width in no part exceeds one league ; and in many places is narrowed down to half that distance.

The present town of Monrovia is situated on the inland side of this peninsula, forms the S. W. bank of the river Montserado, about



two miles within the extremity of the cape. The original settlement approached within 150 yards of the water; and occupied the highest part of the spinal ridge, which traverses a large part of the peninsula, and rises at this place to about 75 feet. A dense and lofty forest of timber-trees, entangled with vines and brush-wood, so as to be nearly impracticable by any but the feet of savages, and savage beasts, formed the majestic covering of a large proportion of this tract, when the territory was bargained for by the agents of the American Colonization Society, in December, 1821.

Opposite to the town and near the mouth of the Montserado river, are two small islands, containing together, less than three acres of ground. The largest of these islands is nearly covered with houses built in the native style, and occupied by a family of several hundred domestic slaves, formerly the property of an English factor, but now held, in a state of qualified vassalage, very common in Africa, by a black man to whom the right of the original owner has devolved since his return to Europe. Many of this family, including the old patriarch at their head, are strangers on this part of the coast, have no participation in the politics of their neighbours, and are frequently the objects of their jealousy.—and till restrained by the protection of the American Colony,—of their oppression.

The tribes of the neighbourhood are, 1st, the DEYS; who inhabit the coast from 25 miles to the northward of Montserado, to the mouth of the Junk, about 36 miles to the southeastward. Contiguous to this nation, and next interior, are, 2dly, the QUEANS, a small and quiet people, whose country lies to the E. of cape Montserado; and, 3dly, the GERRANS, a much more numerous and toilsome race of men occupying the country to the northward of the upper parts of the St. Paul river. Still further interior is the formidable and warlike nation of the CONDOES, whose name alone is the terror of all their maritime neighbours.

It is proper, in this place, to advert to a small hamlet placed on the beach one mile to the northward of the settlement, belonging to a people entirely distinct in origin, language and character, from all their neighbours. These are the Kroomen, well known by foreigners visiting the coast, as the watermen and pilots of the country. They originate from a populous maritime tribe, whose country is Settra-Kroo, near cape Palmas. The custom of their tribe obliges all, except the old, the princes of the blood, and a few others, to disperse to different parts of the coast, and form them-



selves in small towns near every road-stead and station frequented by trading vessels ; where they often remain, unless summoned home to assist on some grand national occasion, from two to six, and even ten years, according to their success in accumulating a little inventory of valuables, with which their pride is satisfied to return to their friends and country. These people are decidedly the most active, enterprising, intelligent and laborious in this part of Africa; and in the size, strength and fine muscular proportions of their persons, have few superiors, as a nation, in the world. The number of families belonging to their settlement near the mouth of the Montserado, scarcely exceeds a dozen, and may comprehend fifty individuals.

The purchase of the Montserado territory was effected in December, of 1821; of which transaction, a particular account was published by the Colonization Society, a few months afterwards. The occupation of the country by as many of the dispersed American Emigrants as could be collected, early in the following year, was also announced by Dr. Ayres, on his return to the United States, the same season; and noticed in the report of the Society, for 1823.

Two small schooners belonging to the Colony were employed in the transportation of the settlers in January, 1822; in which service they continued to be occasionally occupied, until the latter part of the following May. But in this period a variety of unpleasant indications of the hostile temper of the Dey people, fully demonstrating the insincerity of their engagements in relation to the lands, were but too distinctly afforded the settlers.

On the arrival of the first division, consisting chiefly of the single men, the natives positively, and with menaces of violence, forbade their landing. The smallest of the two Islands at the mouth of the Montserado, had been obtained by special purchase, of John S. Mill,\* at that time the occupant and proprietor; on which the people and property were safely debarked, without any actual opposition. But the endeavours of the agent, either by the decision

\* Mr. Mill, an African by birth, and son of an English merchant who owned a large trading concern on the coast, had enjoyed a superior English education, was employed in a respectable capacity in the colony, in 1824, and died of a rapid phthisis pulmonalis, July 20th, 1825. The interest he took in the foundation of the Colony, entitles his memory to the grateful recollection of its friends.

of his tone, or by means of arguments drawn from the justice of his procedure, or prospective advantages to be expected from the settlement, entirely failed to conciliate their friendship, or alter their settled purpose to expel the colonists from their country.

But in that spirit of duplicity which has marked the policy of too many who claim to be their superiors, the Chiefs of the tribe, in a few days, held out an offer of accommodation with the most imposing appearances of sincerity and reason. The ferment seemed in a great measure allayed; and the agent was so far deluded by the stratagem, as to render it in the first instance entirely successful. Yielding to an invitation to meet the country authorities in a friendly conference, at king Peter's town, he imprudently put his person in their power, and found himself a prisoner. Having been detained several days, Dr. Ayres consented, as the condition of his freedom, to re-accept the remnant of the goods which had been advanced the month preceding, in part payment for the lands: but contrived to evade their injunction for the immediate removal of the people from the country, by alleging the want of *vessels* for the purpose.

The individuals at this time on Perseverance Island did not amount to twenty. The island itself being a mere artificial formation, and always becalmed by the high land of the Cape which towers above it in the direction of the ocean, soon proved itself to be a most insalubrious situation. The only shelter it afforded to the people and stores was to be found under the decayed thatch of half a dozen diminutive huts, constructed after the native manner of building; and the Island was entirely destitute of fresh water and firewood. All the settlers had left Sierra Leone in a good state of health. But the badness of the air, the want of properly ventilated houses, and sufficient shelter, with other circumstances of their new situation, soon began to prey upon their strength, and caused several cases of intermittent fever; from a course of which most of the company had been but a very few months recovered.

Happily, a secret, ex-parte arrangement was, at this critical period, settled with king George, who resided on the Cape, and claimed a sort of jurisdiction over the northern district of the peninsula of Montserado; in virtue of which the settlers were permitted to pass across the river, and commence the laborious task of clearing away the heavy forest which covered the site of their in-

tended town.—It may illustrate a trait of the African character, to observe that the consideration which moved this Chief to accord to the settlers a privilege which has manifestly led to their permanent establishment at Montserado, and the translation of the country to new masters, was the compliment of half a dozen gallons of rum, and about an equal amount in African trade-cloth, and tobacco.

Every motive which interest, increasing sufferings, and even the love of life, could supply, at this moment, animated the exertions of this little band. Their Agent had left them to the temporary superintendence of one of their own number,\* under whose counsel and example the preparation of their new habitations advanced so rapidly, as in a very few weeks, to present the rudiments of 22 dwellings, ranged in an orderly manner, on the principal street of their settlement.

But at this interesting period, when hope and success began to re-assert in the brightened sphere of their fortunes a decided ascendant, one of those unforeseen circumstances which so often entirely frustrate the best concerted schemes of human prudence, and warn mankind of the supremacy of a divine Providence, suddenly terminated the pleasing anticipations of the settlers in bitter disappointment, and kindled around them the flame of war.

A small vessel, prize to an English cruiser, bound to Sierra Leone with about 30 liberated Africans, put into the roads for a supply of water, and had the misfortune to part her cable and come ashore, within a short distance of Perseverance Island. In this state she was, in a few hours, beat to fragments by the action of a heavy surf.—The natives pretend to a prescriptive right which interest never fails to enforce in its utmost extent, to seize and appropriate the wrecks and cargoes of vessels stranded under whatever circumstances, on their coast. The English schooner having drifted upon the main land about one mile from the extremity of the Cape, and a small distance below George's town, was immediately claimed as his property. His people rushed to the beach with their arms, to sustain this claim; and attempting to board the wreck, were fired upon by the prize master and compelled to desist. In the mean time the aid of the settlers was sent for; which, from an opinion of the extreme danger of their English visitants,

\*Frederick James, who now holds in the municipal government of the Colony, a situation of the very first respectability.

they immediately afforded. A boat was instantly manned, and despatched to their relief; and a brass field piece stationed on the island, brought to bear upon the assailants. The latter then hastily retired to their town, which was, like most African hamlets, closely environed by an ancient growth of trees, with the loss of two of their number killed and several disabled. The English officer, his crew and the Africans, were brought off in safety; but suffered the total loss of their vessel, with most of the stores and other property on board of her.

But owing to some very culpable neglect on the part of the persons who served the field piece on this occasion, the fire was communicated from the fusee, to the thatch roof of the store-house containing the provisions, arms, ammunition, merchandise, and other public property of the Colony. The powder, a few casks of provisions, and a scanty supply of other stores, were providentially rescued, through the timely exertions of the people. But property amounting to near three thousand dollars, assorted for the settlement, and all of the first necessity, was consumed!

The country people disappointed of the valuable tempting booty, which, in imagination they had appropriated by anticipation, manifestly, in consequence of the presence and interference of the settlers, became as will be readily supposed, exasperated against them to the highest pitch of hostility. The sight of their dead and wounded countrymen completed the measure of their irritation; and fiercely excited in their minds a savage thirst of vengeance. Nothing but the dread of opposing the great guns of the Islanders could, at this moment, have restrained them from opening upon them volleys of musketry, from the opposite bank of the river; which, had it been continued for any length of time, could scarcely have failed to prove in a high degree destructive. But seldom venturing near enough to give the least precision to their fire, they were always sure, on delivering it, to retire with the utmost precipitation to the deepest part of the forest, before they could collect sufficient assurance to reload their pieces: and a single discharge of a four or six pounder before they had evaded the range of its shot, seldom failed to put an end to their insolence for the remainder of the day.

But in this mockery of ordinary warfare, it is to be observed, that no combination of the tribes—not even an union of the forces of the smallest single tribe of the country, had taken place.

King George's warriors, scarcely numbering 20 men, were the only individuals who had presumed to go to the length of open hostilities. And in this procedure they could justify themselves to the country authorities only on the ground of self-defence. A war, among the tribes of this country, to be legal, must have been resolved upon in a general assembly of their chiefs; unless deliberation and delay are precluded, as in the present case, by an apparent necessity of self protection. Such an assembly not having been at this time convoked, the actual danger to which the settlers were exposed, was wholly confined to the south, or King George's side of the Montserado river. But as the settlers were obliged to derive their whole supply of fresh water from this bank—particularly as the site of the town which they had eagerly designated for their future residence, and made some progress in preparing, occupied the height overlooking their enemy's town—they were subjected to various inconveniences, and obliged entirely to discontinue their principal work. The frames of their unfinished dwellings were thrown down; and several petty insults of a like nature inflicted upon them, which they had no power to prevent. But the wakeful activity of their savage enemy soon caused them to deplore a more melancholy proof of his power to injure them.

A boat, strongly manned and armed, had proceeded to the distance of nearly three miles above the Island, on the morning of the 27th of March, for a supply of water. It was discovered, half an hour afterwards, that King George's warriors had also passed up the river by land, evidently with the intention of attacking the boat's crew. A second boat was then despatched to overtake, and, in case of necessity, support the first. Several of the English seamen, conducted by their officer, had, with their usual promptitude on such occasions, volunteered their attendance. The bank of the Montserado was at that time entirely covered, the whole distance which the boats had to ascend it, with heavy trees; and in several places, is nearly overhung with precipitous rocks of very broken appearance, and enormous size. The boats had proceeded without any discovery of their enemy to the watering-place—filled their casks and put off from the shore on their return, when the firing commenced. The boats had just entered the upper end of the narrow reach formed by the south line of Bank Island and the main land. As nothing could have been effected by a show to resistance against a concealed enemy, the boats could do little



more than hold the opposite shore as closely as possible, and make the best of their way down the river. The fire was renewed, at all the different angles and projections of the bank which allowed the foe to approach under cover of the rocks and trees, sufficiently near the boat channel of the river. It is to be presumed they suffered nothing in this unequal skirmish; while on board of the boats one colonist\* and an English seaman, were mortally wounded—and two other persons slightly injured.

These occurrences could not fail to diffuse a spirit of fervid excitement throughout the Dey tribe. The fatal consequences likely to follow the admission into their country of civilized strangers—strangers whom they had learnt to be entirely adverse to the slave-trade—formed the topic of violent and exaggerated declamation, by nearly all whose interest, fears, or prejudices were concerned in their expulsion. Old King Peter, the venerable patriarch of the nation, was capitally impeached and brought to trial on a charge of betraying the interests of his subjects by selling their country. The accusation was substantiated; and it was for some time doubtful whether the punishment annexed by the laws and usages of all nations, to high treason, would not be carried into execution against a king to whom they had been accustomed to render obedience for more than thirty years.

The settlers were particularly embarrassed by their uncertainty as to the actual connexion subsisting between their neighbours of the larger island, and their enemy. Bă Caiă, who was at the head of the former, had constantly held forth the most friendly professions; and at this time, by secretly supplying them with fuel and water, gave a more substantial proof than ever, of their sincerity. But his plantations and numerous detached bodies of his people, were entirely exposed to the power of the Deys, with whom it was of the first necessity for him to maintain an amicable correspondence. Hence he came unavoidably to incur the suspicions of the colonists, who, from the proximity of his town, could at any hour lay it in ashes. Bă Caiă had, for many years, sustained himself in his unprotected and delicate situation by means of a fortunate alliance with king Boatswain,† one of the most fa-

\* Wiley Jones, from Petersburg, Va. who expired on the 18th of April.

† Boatswain is a native of Shebar. In his youth he had served in some menial capacity on board of an English merchant vessel, where he acquired the name which he still retains. His personal qualifications are of the most



nous and powerful chiefs of the Condoes. Boatswain's power had been often felt by the maritime tribes, and the most convincing proofs of it were continually given in his bloody wars in the interior. He had thus been long acquiring a general influence, which gave him, even in the affairs of his neighbours, an authority little short of dictatorial. To this powerful ally, the old man now had recourse ; who, with the promptitude which distinguishes all his movements, immediately made his appearance on the Montserado, not, as he said, to *pronounce sentence*, between the coast people and the strangers, but to *do justice*: and he had actually brought along with him a force sufficient to carry his decisions into immediate effect. But the Deys, however stung by this insolence, were not in a situation to resent it.

The Agents who had been absent from the Cape since the commencement of these trying events, now rejoined the settlers on the island. Boatswain having by a direct exertion of authority, convoked the head-chiefs of the neighbourhood, sent for the Agents and principal settlers, to come and explain the nature of their claims on the country, and to set forth their grievances. They complained of the 'bad faith of the Deys in withholding the possession of lands which they had sold to the colonists ; and of the injurious acts of hostility committed by king George, apparently with the consent of his superiors.' A desultory and noisy discussion followed, in which the savage umpire disdained to take any part whatever. But having ascertained the prominent facts of the case, he at length arose, and put an end to the assembly by laconically remarking to the Deys, "That having sold their country, and accepted the payment in part, they must take the

commanding description ; and to them he appears wholly indebted for his present notoriety. To a stature approaching seven feet in height, perfectly erect, muscular, and finely proportioned—a countenance noble, intelligent, and full of animation—he unites great comprehension and activity of mind, and, what is still more imposing, a savage loftiness and even grandeur of sentiment—forming altogether, an assemblage of qualities, obviously disproportioned to the actual sphere of his ambition. He is prodigal of every thing except the means of increasing the terror of his name. "I give you a bullock," said he to an agent of the Society, "not to be considered as Boatswain's present, but for your breakfast." To his friend Ba Caia, he once sent, "King B. is your friend : he therefore advises you to lose not a moment in providing yourself plenty of powder and ball—or, in three days (the least time possible to make the journey) let me see my fugitive woman again."

consequences. Their refusal of the balance of the purchase money, did not annul, or affect the bargain. Let the Americans have their lands immediately. Whoever is not satisfied with my decision, let him tell me so!" Then, turning to the Agents, "I promise you protection. If these people give you further disturbance, send for me. And I swear, if they oblige me to come again to quiet them, I will do it to purpose, by taking their heads from their shoulders; as I did old king George's, on my last visit to the coast, to settle disputes."

Whatever might be thought of the equity of this decision, there was but one sentiment as to the necessity of acquiescing in it. The usual interchange of friendly presents between the parties, then took place; and the settlers immediately resumed their labours on the Cape.

That guardian Providence which has so graciously made the protection of this infant settlement, in every stage, the object of its tenderest care, has in few instances been more conspicuous, than in thus employing the ill-gotten power of an ambitious stranger in the interior of Africa, to deliver the colonists, at a moment when hostilities would have defeated their object, from the machinations of their treacherous neighbours. To render this interposition the more remarkable, it had actually proceeded to the length of removing the principal obstacles to the pacification of the Deys, almost without an effort on the part of the settlers, and entirely without the knowledge, or the presence, of either of the Agents. There would be a degree of impiety in repressing in the breast the sentiment of religious recognition, which a single dispensation of so impressive a character is fitted to excite. But it must be perceived, in the progress of this narrative, that every instance of extraordinary providential deliverance and protection, borrows a more affecting lustre from the reflected light of many others.

On the 28th of April, the ceremony of taking possession of the Cape and country was performed, with probably the effect of adding a fresh excitement to the zeal of the people. But, shall we most deplore, or admire in human nature, that weakness which can so easily mistake the present visions of hope, for the prophecies of futurity? On the very spot which was gladdened with the felicitations of this occasion, some who were the objects of them, were soon, alas! to pour out their lives through the wounds

received in a doubtful contest for that very occupation which they had so blindly anticipated !

But shortly after this formality, a proof of a much more significant and substantial nature, was afforded by the people, of the entire sincerity of every former profession of attachment to the country of their adoption.

The houses were yet destitute of roofs, for which the material was to be sought in the almost impracticable swamps of the country—the rainy-season-tornadoes had already commenced—the island, if much longer occupied by all the colonists, must prove the grave of many—sickness was beginning to be prevalent ; and both the Agents were among the sufferers—the store of provisions was scanty, and all other stores nearly exhausted ! The threatening storm of native hostility had been, for a moment, averted—but the very circumstances attending the dispersion of the cloud, proved how suddenly and how easily it might re-collect its fury. Under these circumstances, deliberately surveyed, it required a very large share of operative confidence in the providence of the Most High, not to have yielded to the discouragement they so strongly tended to create : and it is not to be admired, that the Agent should have come forward with a proposal to re-embark the settlers, and stores, and convey them back to Sierra Leone. But from this proposal a large majority of the people entirely dissented ; and it was urged no farther. And could we estimate events according to their intrinsic importance, independently of their disguising or concealing circumstances, that interesting moment would doubtless form the era, whence the real occupation of Africa ought to date ; and which deserves its annual celebration, as long as the colony shall afford an asylum to the oppressed strangers of Africa. For the little band who embraced, under prospects so replete with the most appalling difficulties and dangers, the resolution of remaining on the Montserado, however abandoned, gave in the very act, the best pledge in their power to offer,—a pledge in which their property, their health, their families, and their lives were included, to find for themselves, and their brethren, a home in Africa. And it is a pledge I add, which an approving Providence has since enabled them, at the expense of some blood, and many severe toils, triumphantly to redeem.

Mr. Wiltberger, the Society's assistant Agent, consented to await with the people, the return of the schooner from another

trip to the windward. But the number of the settlers, small at first, was yet farther reduced by the departure along with Dr Ayres, of a small number who had embraced his proposal. Exclusive of the women and children and four native Africans, the little force remaining, numbered 21 persons capable of bearing arms.

The settled rains of the season now set in with uncommon violence: and the struggles and hardships encountered by this houseless, but persevering band, are not easily to be imagined. But before the last of May, several families had removed and taken up their residence on the Peninsula; a store-house sufficient to contain their stores was built of good materials; and a small frame house finished for the Agent.

In the second week of July, the island was finally evacuated, and all were happily re-united, each in his own humble dwelling, on the spot where they have since remained. The Agents had in the interim both embarked on board of the only public schooner fit for service, and sailed for the United States. The settlement was left under the supervision of one of the emigrants,\* who acquitted himself of the charge with entire credit, and at the present time enjoys in the municipal government one of the most respectable situations in the gift of the people.

It will be readily perceived that no part of the provisions necessary for the consumption of the settlers in the present season, could be drawn from the produce of the soil. Vessels seldom appear on the coast between the months of May and November; and, as the event proved, nothing in that period could be purchased from abroad. The most economical management of the stores on hand, could not make them last more than half the season of the rains; and the natives treacherously waiting the departure of Boatswain into the interior, and the disappearance of the little armed schooner, belonging to the Colony, on her voyage for the United States, replaced themselves in an attitude of incipient hostility, and prohibited the conveyance of supplies to the Colony out of the surrounding country. To add if possible to the dark and desperate prospects of the settlers, the stores in their possession had been reported to the managers at home, as nearly equal to a twelvemonth's consumption. But the eye of God was upon them. His providence was again interposed for their preservation.

\* Elijah Johnson, from New-York, in 1820.

The Government of the United States having a number of Africans in the custody of the marshal of Georgia, who had been liberated a few months previously, from the hold of a slave-vessel by the operation of the benevolent law of 1819, determined at this time on the transportation of them to their native country. A vessel was chartered for this service in Baltimore; on board of which 37 persons, under the patronage of the Colonization Society, were also embarked, with a moderate supply of stores for the settlement.

This expedition was committed to the direction of Mr. J. Ashmun, who, in the expectation of aiding a good work to which much of his time and labour had been already devoted in the United States, had consented to accept from the Society a commission for the voyage. Under an arrangement for returning in the same vessel, he had yielded to the affectionate solicitude of his lady to accompany him. This vessel, the brig "*Strong*," of Baltimore, sailed from Hampton Roads on the 26th of May; but proving a most indifferent sailor, did not arrive in the offing of Fayal, one of the western islands, before the 26th of June. Having at this island repaired the injury sustained in a very severe and protracted gale, and refreshed the already exhausted passengers, she sailed again on the 3d of July, and anchored under Cape Montserado on the 8th of August. Of 53 passengers not an individual had suffered from indisposition on the last half of this tedious voyage.

The following day, on communicating with the shore, Mr. Ashmun found, equally to his astonishment and regret, that both the Agents had taken their departure from the country—that the public property, as already related, had been chiefly consumed by fire—and that the immediate prospects of the settlers, precarious before on account of their numerical weakness in the midst of barbarous nations, was but little improved by an accession of numbers, without a proportional increase of the means of subsisting them. It was now the height of the rainy season; but not even a thatch roof was to be found not in the occupancy of the settlers—some of whom were still very insufficiently sheltered themselves. Houses were therefore to be built for the reception of the emigrants before they could be safely landed; and a secure store house, completed before it was possible to discharge the transport.

Mr. Ashmun found himself constrained, by the pledge he had given the Board of Managers, to render the Colony whatever aid



might be in his power, and by every motive which humanity could supply, to take charge of the Colony, and convert its slender resources, whether for the protection, or subsistence of the people, to the best account. A large store-house was accordingly laid off; and the only practicable preparations made, during the 9th, for landing the passengers. But in the morning of the same day, the brig having unfortunately parted a cable, was obliged to throw out the only remaining anchor on board; by which she was lying when the Agent returned on board in the evening.

But, at day light on the 10th, the watch gave the alarming intelligence that the cable had again parted, and the best bower anchor gone! The vessel was lying two cable's length from the beach, and a strong breeze blew directly on shore. But the current from the river favouring at the moment, the vessel was by the prompt exertions of an active crew, got under sail in time to save her from immediate destruction; and by being brought close to the wind, was enabled to make good a course parallel with that part of the coast. The passengers, to the number of 51, were still on board. The brig's boats could not land ten persons at a trip; and after struggling for 48 hours to get to windward, the vessel was found to be land-locked completely, within the projecting promontories of Capes Montserado and Mount. The reader in the least acquainted with nautical affairs, may conjecture the probable fate both of the vessel and passengers. But Providence again interposed for the preservation of both. A small anchor was recovered by the assistance of the boats, by which the brig was again moored in the road-stead; but at the distance of 5 miles from the settlement. The people were safely landed on the 13th and 14th; but owing to the prevalence of boisterous weather, the loss of the principal boat employed in the service, and the sickening of the boatmen, it became a work of the most severe and difficult nature, to bring her cargo to land. In the Colonial Journal of this period, several instances are met with in which the only boat that could be employed in this business, was carried twenty miles out to sea by the force of the currents, and returned at the end of 24 hours, without having been able to approach within a league of the brig! But after four weeks of incessant exertion, the Agent enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing the passengers and property all safe ashore; the latter secured in an extensive store-



house ; and most of the former in a good measure protected from the incessant rains of that inclement season.

In the mean time the Agent had lost not a moment in ascertaining the external relations of the settlement, and the temper of its neighbours. He immediately proceeded to visit the most considerable of the kings ; whom he thought it safe to bind to a pacific policy, by encouraging them to open a trade with the Colony—by forming with them new amicable alliances—and receiving the sons and subjects of as many as possible to instruct in the language and arts of civilization. But it could not escape observation that under these smooth and friendly appearances, lurked a spirit of determined malignity, which only waited for an opportunity to exert itself for the ruin of the infant Colony. So early as the 18th of August, the present Martello tower was therefore planned ; a company of labourers employed by the Agent, in clearing the ground on which it stands ; and a particular survey taken of the military strength, and means of the settlers. Of the native Americans, 27, when not sick, were able to bear arms ; but they were wholly untrained to their use ; and capable in their present undisciplined state of making but a very feeble defence indeed. There were 40 muskets in store, which, with repairing, were capable of being rendered serviceable. Of 1 brass, and 5 iron guns attached to the settlement, the last only was fit for service, and four of the former required carriages. Several of these were nearly buried in the mud on the opposite side of the river. Not a yard of abattis, or other fence-work had been constructed. There was no fixed ammunition ; nor, without great difficulty and delay, was it possible to load the only gun which was provided with a sufficient carriage.

It was soon perceived that the means as well as an organized system of defence were to be originated, without either the materials, or the artificers usually considered necessary for such purposes. In the organization of the men, thirteen African youths attached to the United States' Agency, most of whom had never loaded a musket, were enrolled in the lieutenant's corps, and daily exercised in the use of arms. The guns were, one after another, with infinite labour transported over the river, conveyed to the height of the peninsula, and mounted on rough truck carriages, which, in the event, proved to answer a very good purpose. A master of ordnance was appointed, who, with his assistants, re-

paired the small arms—made up a quantity of fixed ammunition, and otherwise aided in arranging the details of the service.

The little town was closely environed, except on the side of the river, with the heavy forest in the bosom of which it was situated—thus giving to a savage enemy an important advantage of which it became absolutely necessary to deprive him, by enlarging to the utmost, the cleared space about the buildings. This labour was immediately undertaken, and carried on without any other intermission, than that caused by sickness of the people, and the interruption of other duties equally connected with the safety of the place. But the rains were immoderate and nearly constant.

In addition to these fatiguing labours, was that of maintaining the nightly watch :—which, from the number of sentinels necessary for the common safety, shortly became more exhausting than all the other burdens of the people. No less than 20 individuals were every night detailed for this duty, after the 31st of August.

At the commencement of the third week after his arrival, the Agent was attacked with fever—and three days afterwards experienced the greater calamity of perceiving the health of his wife assailed with symptoms of a still more alarming character.

The sickness from this period made a rapid progress among the last division of emigrants. On the 1st of September 12 were wholly disabled. The burdens thus thrown upon their brethren accelerated the work of the climate so rapidly, that on the 10th of this month, of the whole expedition, only two remained fit for any kind of service. The Agent was enabled, by a merciful dispensation of Divine Providence, to maintain a difficult struggle with his disorder for four weeks ; in which period, after a night of delirium and suffering, it was not an unusual circumstance for him to be able to spend an entire morning in laying off and directing the execution of the public works.

King George abandoned his town on the Cape, about the 1st of September ; and conveyed all his people and moveables towards the head waters of the Junk river, at about 6 leagues distance. The intercourse between the other people of the tribe and the settlement had nearly terminated ; and the native youths, whose residence on the Cape had been regarded as the best security of the good conduct of the tribe, were daily deserting, in consequence, as it was ascertained, of secret intelligence conveyed them by their friends.

The plan of defence adopted was to station five heavy guns, at the different angles of a triangle which should circumscribe the whole settlement—each of the angles resting on a point of ground sufficiently commanding to enfilade two sides of the triangle, and sweep a considerable extent of ground beyond the lines. The guns at these stations were to be covered by musket proof triangular stockades, of which any two should be sufficient to contain all the settlers in their wings. The brass piece and two swivels mounted on travelling carriages, were stationed in the centre, ready to support the post which might be exposed to the heaviest attack. After completing these detached works, it was in the intention of the Agent, had the enemy allowed the time, to join all together by a paling to be carried quite around the settlement ;—and in the event of a yet longer respite, to carry on, as rapidly as possible, under the protection of the nearest fortified point, the construction of the Martello tower ; which, as soon as completed, would nearly supersede all the other works ; and by presenting an impregnable barrier to the success of any native force, probably become the instrument of a general and permanent pacification. Connected with these measures of safety, was the extension to the utmost, of the cleared space about the settlement, still leaving the trees and brushwood, after being separated from their trunks, to spread the ground with a tangled hedge, through which nothing should be able to make its way, except the shot from the batteries.

This plan was fully communicated to the most intelligent of the people ; which, in the event of the disability or death of the Agent, they might, it was hoped, so far carry into effect as to ensure the preservation of the settlement.

It was an occasion of grateful acknowledgment to that Divine Power under whose heavy hand the Agent was now obliged to bow, that he had been spared to settle these arrangements, and see them in a train of accomplishment, previous to his being laid entirely aside. It was also a source of melancholy satisfaction that he was permitted to watch the fatal progress of disease in an affectionate wife until the last ray of intellectual light was extinguished by its force, two days before her death. Her life had been one of uncommon devotion and self-denial, inspired by a vigorous and practical faith in the Divine Saviour of the world ; and her end, according to his promise, was ineffable peace. She expired on Sunday the 15th of September.

Two of the emigrants belonging to the last expedition followed in the same week ; at which time there remained but a single individual of the company not on the sick list.

From this date until the first week in November, the Agent continued in an extremely low and dangerous state ; so entirely debilitated in body and mind, as to be nearly incapable of motion, and insensible to every thing except the consciousness of suffering. Two of the posts had been put in complete order in this time, he afterwards learnt, by the persevering exertions of only a part of the settlers. For as is the misfortune of all communities, so it was discovered in this, that there were individuals on whose selfish feelings, the promptings of benevolence, the demands of equity, considerations of the most pressing necessity, and the more imperative and awful dictates of conscience, could make no effectual impression—and to whom, the moment which delivered them from that coercion of authority, was the signal for their desertion of every public and private duty ! It is but an act of justice to the deserving colonists, to make this discrimination ; and to assure the others, wherever they happen to exist in vagrant wretchedness, that posterity will owe them no thanks that the first settlement on Cape Montserado was not reduced to a heap of carnage and ruins !

The Agent, as soon as the force of his disease had so far subsided as to enable him to look abroad, discovered with great satisfaction, that the people had plied their labours with so much diligence, as to produce a wide opening on the whole of the southern quarter of the settlement. The branching tops of the fallen trees formed so perfect an obstruction to the passage of human beings, as nearly to assure the safety of the settlement against an attack from that side. But the want of system in carrying on the diversified services devolving on the people, of whom several were nearly overpowered by an incessant routine of nightly watching and daily labour, had still left the other preparation too little advanced to authorize an opinion of the safety of the place, for an hour. The carpenters, who alone were able to direct or assist in the construction of the gun-carriages, had, for the encouragement and direction of the labourers, given up too much of their time to the common fatigues of the field. The western station, which in the present state of the defence, was obviously the most exposed, not only remained entirely uncovered, but the long revolving

nine pounder, which was to constitute its chief strength, was still unmounted.

But the Agent could not walk at this date without support; and with a mind shattered by the strokes of a malady believed to be mortal, could neither decide upon nor enforce, any arrangement which should much accelerate their most essential preparations. But, from this period, his febrile paroxysms were daily less subduing and protracted—and by a recurrence to the journal, it appears, that he was able on the 7th of November, to recommence the daily entries, and thereafter take a daily increasing share in the operations of the people.

It is here proper to return to a period already considerably passed in the foregoing narrative, in order to take a connected view of the movements of the natives; who, without formally denouncing war, had been constantly busied in hostile machinations; which at this date were so far matured, as to want nothing but a proper opportunity of being carried into effect.

It has been seen that out of the dread of provoking Boatswains' resentment, they had reluctantly assumed a show of friendship. But this disguise of the true state of their intentions, was too slight to conceal them from the most superficial observer. Unhappily, the chiefs had attributed the abrupt departure of the Agents to a want of spirit, and a dread of their power: and were naturally stimulated by the absence of so important and formidable a means of defence as was afforded by the two schooners, to make the most of the circumstance, and directly attack the settlement: hoping, if successful, to be able either to bribe, or resist the indignation of king Boatswain.

The arrival of the "Strong," in August, delayed for a while the execution of their purpose. But no sooner had that vessel sailed, about the first of October, than secret meetings for discussing the question of renewing hostilities were again holden. The Agent had arranged a plan for obtaining intelligence, which left him ignorant of none of their movements—and by the singular fidelity and diligence of an individual who has never yet been properly compensated, and whose name it is necessary to conceal, was perfectly informed of the temper and stand of every influential head-man in the country, and often furnished with the very arguments used by them in their debates.

At this time a diversity of views were entertained by the differ-

ent members of their war-council. It was contended by kings Peter and Bristol, that "The increased numbers of the Colonists, gave them a superiority which would insure their success—that they were not a settlement of foreigners and enemies, but of their countrymen and friends, as was proved by the identity of their colour, and therefore had a right to reside in their country, and might be expected to turn all the civilization which they had learnt abroad, to the improvement of their common country."

Kings George, Governor, and all the other head men of the tribe, contended that "The Americans were strangers who had forgot their attachment to the land of their fathers; for if not, why had they not renounced their connexion with white men altogether, and placed themselves under the protection of the kings of the country? King George had already been under the necessity of removing from his town, and leaving the Cape in their hands. This was but the first step of their encroachments. If left alone, they must, in a very few years, master the whole country. And as all other places were full, their own tribe must be without a home, and cease any longer to remain a nation. The armed schooners were gone;—the two first Agents had fled also;—the new people could from sickness very little assist the old in the defence of the place; and had brought with them a valuable cargo of stores, which would enrich the conquerors. The White Man was sick; no doubt would die; and the rest were not much superior to an equal number of themselves, and could be easily overcome, either by sudden surprise, or by a wasting and harrassing blockade."

King Peter presuming still to dissent from the general voice of his chiefs, was principally thro' the influence of George, obliged to shut his mouth, during all the following deliberations of the assembly. King Bristol returned home.

Messengers were then despatched in every direction, to solicit the aid of the neighbour tribes. The king of Junk refused to take any active part in person, and sent to assure the colony of his neutrality; but did not prohibit his people from following, individually, their own inclinations. A number came to the war.

King Tom of Little Bassā, entirely declined. King Ben of Half C. Mount, and his people came into the conspiracy. Bristol was himself inactive, but many of his people joined the hostile party.



Bā Caiā, whose island is overlooked by the settlement, was too much agitated by his fears, to resolve on any decided course. He tarried at home, of course; but many of his people gave themselves to the war.

Bromley, Todo, Governor, Konko, Jimmy, Gray, Long Peter, George and Willy with their entire force, and all king Peter's warriors, and the auxiliaries already named, were, in the last week of October, perfectly combined, and assembled under arms on Bushrod Island, about four miles from the settlement, and on the St. Paul.

Throughout their consultation, they had refused to receive any proposals of a pacific nature from the Colony. At length the Agent contrived, through the mediation of Bā Caiā, to say to them, that "He was perfectly apprised of their hostile deliberations, notwithstanding their pains to conceal them; and that, if they proceeded to bring war upon the Americans, without even asking to settle their differences in a friendly manner, they would dearly learn what it was to fight white men."\* To this message no reply was made.

The activity and masculine eloquence of the indefatigable George, were successfully exerted in generally engaging the fighting people near the theatre of the war. Every day produced a sensible augmentation of their numbers on Bushrod Island.

On the 7th of November, intelligence was received at the Cape that the last measures had been taken preparatory to an assault on the settlement, which was ordered within four days. The plan of attack being left to the head warriors, whose trade it is to concert and conduct it, was not to be learnt.

The Agent was able, with assistance, to inspect the works, and review the little force the same evening. He stated to the people the purport of the intelligence just received; that 'war was now inevitable; and the preservation of their property, their settlement, their families, and their lives, depended under God, wholly upon their own firmness and good conduct; that a most important point in the defence of the place, was to secure a perfect uniformity of action, which should assure to every post and individual the firm support of every other. To this end, they must as punctiliously obey their officers as if their whole duty were centered,

\* A phrase by which civilized people of all colours and nations are distinguished in the dialect of the coast,

as it probably was, in that one point; and every man as faithfully exert himself, as if the whole defence depended on his single efforts. A coward, it was hoped, did not disgrace their ranks: and as the cause was emphatically that of God and their country, they might confidently expect his blessing and success to attend the faithful discharge of their duty.\*—Every thing was then disposed in order of action, and the men marched to their posts. They lay on their arms, with matches lighted, through the night.

On the 8th, the Agent, by an effort which entirely exhausted his strength, proceeded to examine the obstruction thrown in the way of the avenues to the settlement; and perceived to his extreme mortification, that the west quarter was still capable of being approached by a narrow path-way, without difficulty; and that the utmost exertions of the workmen had accomplished only the mounting of the revolving nine pounder at the post: by which the path was enfiladed; but that the platform was still left entirely exposed. The eastern quarter was about equally open to the approach of the enemy, but the station was protected by a stockade, and a steep ledge of rocks made the access difficult.

Picket guards of four men each were detailed, to be posted 100 yards in advance of each of the stations, through the night. No man was allowed to sleep before the following day, at sun-rise; and patrols of native Africans were dispersed thro' the woods in every direction. An order was given to families occupying the most exposed houses, to sleep in such as were more centrally situated.\*

Throughout the 9th, the order established on the preceding day continued; and some progress made in the labour of falling trees, and otherwise obstructing every practicable access to the settlement.

Sunday, November 10th. The morning was devoted, as usual, to the refreshment of the settlers, none of whom had slept for the 24 hours preceding. At 1 P. M. all were remanded to their fatigue and other duties, till sun-set; when the order appointed for the preceding night was resumed. The women and children attended divine service.

\* In the multitude of cares devolving on the Agent, who dictated most of his instructions from his bed, the measures necessary to secure the proper observance of this order were unhappily omitted; and the rashness of the misguided individuals who disobeyed it, met with a signal punishment.

Intelligence had reached the Agent early in the day, that the hostile forces had made a movement, and were crossing the Montserado river a few miles above the settlement: but the patrols made no discovery through the day.—At sun-set, however, the enemy again put themselves in motion, and at an early hour of the night, had assembled, as was afterwards learnt, to the number of six to nine hundred men, on the peninsula, where, at the distance of less than half a mile to the westward of the settlement, they encamped till near morning. Their camp, afterwards examined, extended half a mile in length, and induces a strong probability that the number of warriors assembled on this occasion, has been altogether underrated.\*

The most wakeful vigilance on the part of the settlers, was kept up through the night.—But, with a fatality which was quite of a piece with all the hindrances that had impeded the progress of the defences on the western quarter, the picket-guard in advance of that post, ventured on a violation of their orders, by leaving their station, at the first dawn of day; at which it was their duty to remain till sun-rise. The native force was already in motion, and followed directly in the rear of the picket-guard. The latter had just rejoined their gun, about which ten men were now assembled; when the enemy suddenly presenting a front of ten yards in width, at sixty distant, delivered their fire, and rushed forward with their spears to seize the post. Several men were killed and disabled by the first fire, and the remainder driven from their gun without discharging it. Then, retiring upon the centre, (see the arrangement of the guns, p. 21) threw the reserve there stationed, into momentary confusion: and had the enemy at this instant, pressed their advantage, it is hardly conceivable that they should have failed of entire success. Their avidity for plunder was their defeat. Four houses in that outskirt of the settlement, had fallen into their hands. Every man on whose savage rapacity so resistless a temptation happened to operate, rushed impetuously upon the pillage thus thrown in his way. The movement of the main body was disordered and impeded; and an

\* The number given above, is deduced from the discordant accounts given by the kings of the country, after the termination of hostilities; some of whom rated it much higher; but all were ignorant of the true number, and all were interested to state it as low as would obtain credit.

opportunity afforded the Agent, assisted principally by the Rev. Lot Cary, to rally the broken force of the settlers. The two central guns, with a part of their own men, and several who had been driven from the western station, were, with a little exertion, brought back into action, and formed in the line of two slight buildings, thirty yards in advance of the enemy.

The second discharge of a brass field-piece, double-shotted with ball and grape, brought the whole body of the enemy to a stand. That gun was well served, and appeared to do great execution. The havoc would have been greater, had not the fire, from motives of humanity, been so directed as to clear the dwellings about which the enemy's force was gathered in heavy masses. These houses were known at that moment to contain more than twelve helpless women and children.

The eastern and southern posts, were, from their situation, precluded from rendering any active assistance on the occasion; but the officers and men attached to them, deserve the highest praise, of doing their duty by maintaining their stations, and thus protecting the flank and rear of the few whose lot it was to be brought to action.

A few musketeers with E. Johnson at their head, by passing round upon the enemy's flank, served to increase the consternation which was beginning to pervade their unwieldy body. In about twenty minutes after the settlers had taken their stand, the front of the enemy began to recoil. But from the numerous obstructions in their rear, the entire absence of discipline, and the extreme difficulty of giving a reversed motion to so large a body, a small part only of which was directly exposed to danger, and the delay occasioned by the practice of carrying off all their dead and wounded, rendered a retreat for some minutes longer, impossible. The very violence employed by those in the front, in their impatience to hasten it, by increasing the confusion, produced an effect opposite to that intended. The Americans perceiving their advantage, now regained possession of the western post, and instantly brought the long nine to rake the whole line of the enemy. Imagination can scarcely figure to itself a throng of human beings in a more capital state of exposure to the destructive power of the machinery of modern warfare! Eight hundred men were here pressed shoulder to shoulder, in so compact a form that a child

might easily walk upon their heads from one end of the mass to the other, presenting in their rear a breadth of rank equal to twenty or thirty men, and all exposed to a gun of great power, raised on a platform, at only thirty to sixty yards distance! Every shot literally spent its force in a solid mass of living human flesh! Their fire suddenly terminated. A savage yell was raised, which filled the dismal forest with a momentary horror. It gradually died away; and the whole host disappeared. At 8 o'clock the well known signal of their dispersion and return to their homes, was sounded, and many small parties seen at a distance, directly afterwards, moving off in different directions. One large canoe, employed in reconveying a party across the mouth of the Montserado, venturing within the range of the long gun, was struck by a shot, and several men killed.

On the part of the settlers, it was soon discovered that considerable injury had been sustained.

One woman\* who had imprudently passed the night in the house first beset by the enemy, had received 13 wounds, and been thrown aside as dead. Another,† flying from her house with her two infant children, received a wound in the head, from a cutlass, and was robbed of both her babes; but providentially escaped. A young married woman,‡ with the mother of five small children, finding the house in which they slept surrounded by savage enemies, barricadoed the door, in the vain hope of safety. It was forced. Each of the women then seizing an axe, held the irresolute barbarians in check for several minutes longer. Having discharged their guns, they seemed desirous of gaining the shelter of the house previous to reloading. At length, with the aid of their spears, and by means of a general rush, they overcame their heroine adversaries, and instantly stabbed the youngest to the heart. The mother, instinctively springing for her suckling babe, which recoiled through fright, and was left behind, rushed thro' a small window on the opposite side of the house, and providentially escaped to the lines, unhurt, between two heavy fires.

\* Mrs. Ann Hawkins; who after long and incredible sufferings recovered, and is yet living.

† Mrs. Minty Lraper.

‡ Mary Tines.

The Agent had caused a return to be made at 9 o'clock, which certainly exhibited a melancholy statement of the loss sustained by the little company. But it was animating to perceive that none—not even the wounded in their severest sufferings, were dispirited, or insensible of the signal Providence to which they owed the successful issue of their struggle.

It never has been possible to ascertain the number of the enemy killed or disabled on this occasion. The only entry made on the subject in the Colonial Journal, is dated November 15th: and states, “The following circumstances prove the carnage to have been, for the number engaged, great. A large canoe, from which the dead and wounded could be seen to be taken, on its arriving at the opposite side of the Montserado, and which might easily carry twelve men, was employed upwards of two hours in ferrying them over. In this time, not less than ten to twelve trips must have been made. It is also known, that many of the wounded were conveyed away along the south beach, on mats: and that the dead left of necessity in the woods, where many fell, are carried off by their friends every night. But two days ago, twenty-seven bodies were discovered by a party of friendly Condoes employed by the Agent for the purpose. On entering the wood, the offensive effluvia from putrid bodies, is at this time intolerable.”

The numerical force of the settlers amounted to 35 persons, including 6 native youths not 16 years of age. Of this number, about one half were engaged.

At 9 o'clock, the Agent, after advising with the most sensible mechanics, and others of the settlers, issued an order for contracting the lines, by excluding about one-fourth part of the houses, and

|| The following is an abstract of this return:—

Joseph Benson, shot dead in the beginning of the action;

Mary Tines, stabbed to death in her house;

Thomas Spinn, mortally injured by 5 wounds;

Billy, a native African, mortally wounded;

Ann Hawkins, desperately injured by 13 wounds;

Daniel Hawkins, severely do. through the thigh;

James Benson, very severely do. through the shoulder;

Minty Draper, slightly do. in the face and ear;

2 small children of Minty Draper, missing;

5 do. do. (oldest 13 years) of James Benson, do.

15 Whole number of sufferers.

All the moveable effects of five families had fallen into the enemy's hands.



surrounding the remainder, including the stores, with a musket-proof stockade; at the angles of which, all the guns were to be posted. The fence palings and building materials of individuals, were taken for this palisade, of which, before night, more than 80 yards were completed.

This work was resumed early the next day, and far advanced towards a completion, before it was judged safe to devote an hour even to the melancholy duty of burying the dead; which was performed on the evening of the 12th.—By contracting the lines, the number of men necessary to guard them, was considerably reduced; and thus a relief for the people obtained, which their sickly and feeble state absolutely called for. As early as the 14th, one-half of their number were released from camp duty, after 8 o'clock in the morning; but every man remanded to his post through the night. An additional gun was mounted and posted on the same day: on the 17th, the artillerists were newly organized; and every day witnessed either some improvements in the discipline of the men, or in the means of defence and annoyance.

It could not fail, in the state of utter abandonment and solitude to which this little company was reduced, to be felt as an encouraging circumstance, that Tom Bassa, a prince of some distinction, should, at this moment, have sent a message to assure the Colony of his friendship; and in testimony of his sincerity, to have forwarded a small present of the productions of the country.

The inclosure was completed on Sunday morning, the 17th; when about one-half of the people had the privilege of celebrating Divine Service—a privilege which many of them very highly appreciated.

It is not to be either concealed, or made the object of a too severe censure, that several of the people should have yielded, as soon as leisure was afforded for reflection, to the discouraging circumstances of their situation. There were not at this time, exclusive of rice, 15 days' provisions in store. Every individual was subjected to an allowance which could not sustain animal strength, under the burden of so many severe and extraordinary labours. Nothing could be obtained from the country. Seven infant children were in the hands of an enemy infuriated by his recent losses. The native forces were certainly not dispersed; but it was no longer in the Agent's power either to learn the intentions of the chiefs, or convey any message thro' to them. Add to these

unpleasant ingredients of their lot, the more cruel circumstance, perhaps of all, that the ammunition of the Colony was insufficient for a single hour's defence of the place if hotly attacked, and an apology may surely be found for the very alarming despondency which was invading the minds of several of the settlers.—It was a happy providence that, at the critical moment, the Agent's health was so far mended as to put it in his power often to attend the men, at their posts and labours, by night and day—to animate them by every method which his invention could suggest—and when these failed, to draw from their despair itself, an argument for a faithful discharge of their duty. In this difficult labour, he was ably and successfully supported by several of the most sensible and influential of the Colonists.

It was the Agent's wish, if possible, to engage the kings in treaty, for a peace. The actual state of the settlement required it; and the common principles of humanity must be sacrificed by any degree of indifference in the matter, as long as so large a number of children belonging to the settlement, were in the hands of an enemy, who in his treatment of them was known to be liable to the extremes of caprice and cruelty. To avert, if possible, from these little sufferers, the effects of their savage indignation, and at the same time, open a door for friendly negotiation, a message was on the 22d, with some difficulty, got through to the council of native chiefs, who were engaged in debating the question of renewing hostilities, at King Peter's Town. The purport of this communication was, that “The Americans came with friendly intentions—have evinced those friendly attentions in all their intercourse with the people of this country.—Why have you then brought war on us, without any complaint of injury? We are willing to settle a peace. But we are also prepared to carry on the war; and can render it immensely more bloody and destructive than you felt it before.” The message left the settlement at 6 o'clock, P. M. and at daylight the next morning, an answer was received, that, “having bought the low land of Bushrod Island, the Americans had seized upon the Cape, without right—that the country people visiting the settlement, had been cheated and roughly used by the store-keeper—that the Agents had not fulfilled their promise of instructing the people. But they would gladly make peace, if satisfaction were offered for these injuries.”

From this time to the 28th, messages were daily exchanged; but as all the professions of the chiefs declaratory of their pacific wishes, were accompanied with a demand for presents, and explained in their true sense by their incessant efforts to engage more warriors from every part of the coast and interior, within their influence and knowledge, the preparations against a second attack went forward at the Cape, without intermission.

The 23d was devoted to "humiliation, thanksgiving, and prayer, both on account of the recent success and losses, and the actual perilous state of the settlement." Two days afterwards, the most pressing wants of the people were relieved by a small purchase from a transient trader touching at the Cape. But no ammunition suitable for the large guns could be obtained.

It is due to the disinterestedness of a worthy foreigner, Capt. H. Brassey of Liverpool, who also touched on the 29th, to state, that unasked, and without the prospect of remuneration, he nearly exhausted his own stores to provide the sick and wounded with necessaries; and exerted an extensive influence acquired by a long acquaintance with the country chiefs, to disarm their hostility. But to no purpose. They had hired a strong reinforcement from the Gurrahs and Condoes; and re-united the warriors of the coast by means of new encouragements and new promises; most of which it appeared afterwards, depended on their obtaining possession of the property on the Cape. Of these particulars, secret intelligence was communicated to the Agent on the evening of the 29th of November; with the farther information, that the attack was to be renewed with double the number of warriors employed on the 11th, at day-light on the following morning.

The whole native force, accordingly, in the course of the night, removed to the peninsula, in two bodies; of which one took up its encampment at a small distance to the south-east of the settlement—the other division, occupied the camp in which the assailants of the 11th had passed the night preceding the first attack. But finding on the return of day-light that Capt. Brassey's ketch had not left her anchorage, they deferred the bloody business until the next day.

The Agent for the first time spent the whole night at the different posts; and had the satisfaction to perceive every man attentive to his duty, and every thing connected with the defence

in a state of the most perfect preparation. The wood had been cleared for a considerable space about the town. The enemy in order to approach within musket shot of the works, was obliged to place himself unsheltered, in the open field; and could advance upon no point which was not exposed to the cross-fire of two or more of the posts. The stockade for a distance on each side of all the several stations was rendered impenetrable to musket shot; and in every part afforded a shelter, behind which the defenders might indulge the confidence of being nearly secure—a point of the very first importance to be secured to the unpractised soldier.\*

November 30th was spent by the people in the order of action, as it was known that the enemy in the neighbourhood were in the actual observation of all that passed within the lines. No pickets could be safely trusted during the ensuing night without the enclosure; but the men attached to the different stations were ranged along the stockade at five yards distance from each other, with orders to repair to their guns on the moment the alarm was given. The Agent, spent with the fatigue of waking two successive nights, had reclined at thirty minutes past four upon the light arms which he carried, when the onset was made. The works were attacked at the same moment on nearly opposite sides. The enemy's western division had made their way along the muddy margin of the river, under the protection of the bank, to the north-western angle of the palisade; when, on rising the bank so as to

\*In the National Intelligencer of September 23d, 1823, was published a letter purporting to have been written from Montserado, in which the writer undertakes to pronounce on the measures taken for the defence of the settlement, with an air of affected dogmatism, which, in an entire stranger to the whole business, appears sufficiently ridiculous—But vapouring is the nature of some people, and, like other instances of bad taste, is not to be reasoned out of them. It is the mis-statements (they deserve a much harsher name) contained in this letter, which I am concerned to expose. They are as numerous as the assertions of the writer on the chief subject of the letter—and too gross and artificial, I fear, for charity itself to impute to ignorance or misinformation. If the writer of the letter has any apology to offer to the world for having been the instrument of propagating so miserable and injurious a tissue of fictions, it ought not to be withheld. And none will with sincerer pleasure than myself admit an explanation which shall reconcile with the honourable motives of the writer, the assertions of his unfortunate letter.

J. A.

become visible from the western post, they had opened upon it a sudden and brisk fire; which was promptly and very steadily returned by the iron gun, supported by the reserve field piece from the centre. The assailants were repulsed with considerable loss. Ten minutes afterwards they renewed the onset, and forcing their way higher up the bank than before, contended with greater obstinacy, and suffered still more severely. A third attempt was made to carry this post; but with the same ill success.

On the opposite quarter the assault had commenced at the same moment, with still greater vigour. A large body had concealed themselves under a precipitous ledge of rocks forty yards distant; whence they crept nearly concealed from view, within the same number of feet of the station; when they suddenly rose, delivered their fire, and rushed forward with the utmost fury. At this moment the 2 gun battery was unmasked, and opened upon them with immediate effect. After a very few discharges, the body of the enemy having thrown themselves flat upon the earth, disappeared behind the rocks. Their marksmen had taken their stations behind projecting rocks, fallen trees, and large ant-hills, and still kept up a constant and well directed fire; under the cover of which the main body rallied and returned to the attack not less than four times; and were as often repulsed by the well directed fire of the large guns; which was purposely reserved for those occasions.

The Agent at this moment perceiving the enemy in motion towards the right, under cover of a small eminence which favoured their design, proceeded to the southern post, which had not yet been engaged, and ordered it to open upon them the moment their movement brought them within the range of its guns. The order was punctually obeyed; which exposed a large number of the assailants to a galling cannonade both in front and flank, in a situation where their own arms could prove of no effectual service to them. The assault on the opposite side of the town had been already repulsed; and the signal for a general retreat immediately followed. This order was obeyed with such promptitude that the most entire silence succeeded, and every warrior disappeared almost instantaneously.

Not the most veteran troops could have behaved with more coolness, or shewn greater firmness than the settlers, on this oc-

casion. Such had been their hardships, and distressing suspense for the last twenty days, that the first volley of the enemy's fire brought sensible relief to every breast; for it gave assurance that the time had arrived which was to put a period to their anxieties.

The final repulse of the assailants on the western quarter took place in seventy minutes from the commencement of the contest; the attack upon the eastern post, was prolonged ninety minutes; and of the two, was much the most obstinate and bloody. Three of the men serving at the guns of that station, Gardiner, Crook, and Tines, were very badly, the last mortally, wounded. The Agent received three bullets through his clothes, but providentially escaped unhurt. As the natives in close action load their muskets (which are of the largest calibre) with copper and iron slugs, often to the enormous measure of twelve inches, their fire is commonly very destructive. In this conflict of scarcely an hour and a half, the quantity of shot lodged in the paling, and actually thrown within the lines, is altogether incredible; and that it took effect in so few cases can only be regarded as the effect of the special guardianship of Divine Providence.

The number of assailants has been variously estimated; but can never be correctly ascertained. It is known to be much greater than of those engaged on the 11th. Their loss, although from the quantities of blood with which the field was found drenched, certainly considerable, was much less than in the former attack.

The Agent has often said that their plan of assault was the very best that they could have devised. It was certainly sustained and renewed with a resolution that would not disgrace the best disciplined troops. But they were not fully apprised of the power of well served artillery. None of the kings of this part of the coast are without cannon. But to load a great gun, is with them the business of half an hour: and they were seriously disposed to attribute to sorcery the art of charging and firing these destructive machines from 4 to 6 times in the minute.

On their final repulse it was evident that a general panic had seized upon the minds of the whole multitude. An hour afterwards several round shot were fired through the tops of the trees, in different directions parallel with different lines of the coast and banks of the river. In an instant, were seen hundreds of the fugitive wretches running from their hiding-places and throwing



themselves into the water. On discovering the flash of a gun from the batteries, they would instantly disappear under water, till the danger from it was past.

But the general exhilaration produced by the prosperous issue of this effort on the part of the settlers, was greatly moderated by the alarming circumstance, that on an equal distribution of the residue of the shot, among all the guns, after the action, not three rounds remained to each!—Three more of the most effective and useful men in the settlement had been lost from the ranks of its defenders. But a strong confidence in the superintending providence of the Most High was a sentiment which animated the bosom of a majority of the survivors; and in their situation was the only rational source of hope that could be resorted to.

There was at this time little surgical knowledge, less skill, and absolutely no instruments—not a lancet or a probe in the settlement! Its little dispensary had no lack of James's powders, and stores of febrifuges—but for medicating broken bones, and extracting fragments of pot-metal and copper ship-bolts from the shattered limbs of the Colonists, there had been no provision whatever. A dull penknife and common razor were substituted in the place of the first, and a priming wire made to answer the purpose of the last. But the sufferings of the wounded, several of whom retained in their limbs the poisonous and corroding metal which had caused their wounds, for months, was indescribable; and such as could not fail to impress upon a daily witness of them, a conviction of the rashness and cruelty of placing a company of men, subject to the casualties of war, beyond the reach of surgical aid.

A movement discovered near his station, on the following night, had induced the officer of the western post to open a brisk fire of musketry, accompanied with several discharges of the large guns. A circumstance apparently so accidental brought relief to the settlement.

The English colonial schooner, "Prince Regent," laden with military stores, and having as passengers, capt. Laing of the Royal African Light Infantry, and a prize crew commanded by midshipman Gordon, belonging to H. B. M. sloop of war *Driver*, six days from Sierra Leone, bound for Cape Coast, was at this moment in the offing, and a little past the Cape. So unusual a

circumstance as a midnight cannonading on them, could not fail to attract notice; and the vessel lay by till morning. A Krooman by whom she was then boarded, gave intelligence of the situation of the settlement; who was immediately despatched ashore, with the generous offer of any assistance in the power of the schooner to afford.

On the following morning the officers came ashore—and in their characters as neutrals, kindly undertook, at the instance of the Agent, to explore and ascertain the future intentions of the enemy. An interview was procured with the chiefs without much difficulty—as their warriors had principally dispersed, their resources were entirely exhausted, and themselves overwhelmed with vexation and shame. They were easily induced, but with affected reluctance, to sign an instrument binding themselves to observe an unlimited truce with the colony; and make all their differences the subject of a future reference to the arbitration of the governor of Sierra Leone. It is unnecessary to observe that having no complaints to allege, they never afterwards recollected this provision for a reference. And it is equally superfluous to state, that from this time, the colony has been considered as entirely invincible to any native force that may be brought against it. Providence wisely designed to render the early struggle of the Colonists, the means of securing a perpetual and profound tranquillity to their colony.

The death of the amiable and lamented Gordon, and of 8 out of 11 generous seamen, who, with him, volunteered their services to guarantee the truce settled by captain Laing, has been already communicated to the public in the 7th annual report of the Colonization Society. All these individuals fell victims to the climate within four weeks from the sailing of the “Prince Regent,” on the 4th of December.

On the 8th of December came to an anchor a large privateer schooner under Colombian colours; to the commander of which capt. Welsey, and several of the officers, natives of the United States, the Agent in behalf of the colony, was laid under further, and very important obligations. By the aid of the proper mechanics obtained from this vessel, the settlement was put in a superior state of defence; and the sufferings of the wounded alleviated by the kind and assiduous attentions of a skilful surgeon. These friendly offices were continued at intervals, for four weeks.

The Agent's health gradually improving to this period had been injured by excessive exertion; and on the 16th of December entirely sunk under its weight. Medicines were productive of no beneficial effect—a fever slow in its approaches, in a few days became constant, and reduced him to a state of hopeless debility.

By one of those accidents which in their results are obviously seen to be the express appointments of an overruling Providence, a remedy of the most singular nature was administered, when probably no other means could have preserved his life. A self-taught French charlatan, arriving at the cape at this moment in a transient vessel, offered his medical services; which from despair on one hand, and a sense of duty on the other, the Agent accepted. A potion was exhibited of which one of the ingredients was a large spoonful of calomel!\* The Frenchman then proceeded on his voyage; and left the Agent to digest his medicine in the best way he could. Such was the weakness of his system as to be able neither to throw it off, nor to take it into the circulation, for five days. The crude poison was then avoided; and a distressing salivation ensued; before which all other morbid symptoms disappeared.

It was the middle of February before he again became active in the affairs of the colony. Two of the captive children had within this period been given up in consideration of a small gratuity. Five were still in the hands of the natives; for whose release a very extravagant ransom was demanded, which it was steadily resolved not to pay.

If any redeeming trait had at this period appeared to soften and atone for the moral deformity of the native character, it certainly was perceived in their treatment of these helpless and tender captives. It was the first object of the captors to place them under the maternal care of several aged women; who in Africa, as in most countries, are proverbially tender and indulgent. These protectresses had them clad in their usual habits; and at an early period of the truce, sent to the colony to inquire the proper kinds of food, and modes of preparing it, to which the youngest had been accustomed. The affections of their little charge were so per-

\* The writer states a fact, which he leaves it to his medical readers to comment upon, and explain as they can.

fectly won in the four months of their captivity, as to oblige their own parents, at the end of that time, literally to tear away from their keepers several of the youngest, amidst the most affecting demonstrations of mutual attachment. This event did not occur until the 12th of March; when their gratuitous restoration was voted almost unanimously, in a large council of native chiefs.

The Agent, after partially recovering from this last and severest trial of a nearly ruined constitution, found the utmost exertion of the Colonists necessary to ensure the preservation of their property, health, and lives, through the approaching rains. Except the store-house, there was but one shingled roof, and frame house, in the settlement. Some of the cabins were without floors; and through the thatch of nearly all, the rain might easily find its way and descend in streams. Such is the description of the hovel occupied by himself at this time. The industrious and provident habits of a majority of the settlers, had been as an effect, in course, of the deranged and long neglected state of their private affairs, wholly subverted: and it required the application of a keener stimulus than could be found in the ordinary calls of duty and the prospect of remote advantages, to engage them in a course of diligent exertions. The store of provisions which had been long expected to be replenished by a shipment from the United States was now consumed; and the want of any effective financial arrangements made by the principals of the establishment at home rendered it a matter of extreme difficulty with the Agent to make any purchases from occasional vessels. He had already assumed, from the necessity of the case, a larger pecuniary responsibility, than, as an individual, he could, under any other circumstances, justify to himself or others.

The productions of the country had been resorted to; and the few disposable goods remaining on hand were already exhausted in their purchase; when on the 12th of March the welcome intelligence of the arrival on the coast of the U. S. ship *Cyane*, R. T. Spence, Esq. was announced by a Krooman from Sierra Leone.

Capt. Spence arrived off Montserado on the 31st. By the most judicious and indefatigable exertions, that gentleman had caused the hulk of the long before condemned and dismantled schooner *Augusta* to be floated, and metamorphosed into a sea-worthy and useful vessel; on board of which he had placed a crew and a quan-

tity of stores for the settlement, under the command of Lieut. Richard Dashiell. Not satisfied with this important service, on his arrival at the Cape, he caused the foundations of the Martello tower to be immediately laid, which, seconded by the disinterested zeal of his officers, he saw nearly completed; and the Agent's house rendered habitable, chiefly by the labour of his own crew, before the 20th of April.

These benevolent exertions have already been suitably acknowledged in the United States;\* and it can never be sufficiently regretted, that the sickness which had begun a fearful inroad upon the crew of that ship during her stay at the Cape, should have issued in the death of no less than 40 persons soon after her arrival in America.†

Dr. Dix, the surgeon of the *Cyane*, became the earliest victim of a too generous zeal for the advancement of the Colony. The tears of a grateful people fell into his grave, which they closed with their own hands over his ashes.

The amiable Seton deserves a more extended memorial. The bloom of youth had just ripened into the graces of manhood, and gave to a person naturally prepossessing, the higher ornament of a benevolent and highly accomplished understanding. He perceived his services were needed by a Colony which had interested his heart; and he gave them. Becoming the voluntary companion and assistant of the solitary Agent, he saw the *Cyane* sail from the coast with composure, on the 21st of April. His conciliating manners, aided by a judicious procedure, deepened in the hearts of the Colonists, the impression first made by his disinterestedness. Seldom has the longest friendship power to cement a more cordial union, than had begun to rivet to this generous stranger the heart of the writer; when in the first week of May, he saw him assailed by the alarming symptoms of fever. The fatal issue of his attack has been already anticipated by the reader. He had long maintained the doubtful struggle—when on the 6th of June, five days after embarking on board of the *Oswego*, for the United States, he resigned his spirit to the God who gave it.

The arrival of the vessel just named, on the 24th of May of

\* See the Annual Report of the Colonization Society.

† This was in part owing to a previous long cruise in the West Indies.

this year, with 66 additional emigrants from the middle states of America, with ample stores and a physician, by placing the colony at once in very altered and improved circumstances, naturally terminates the chain of events which it has been the compiler's object to connect in this narrative. For the subsequent progress of the Colony, there are now extant very ample details in an official form:—details which, if they have in them less to interest the feelings, are of a character in a much higher degree to gratify the wishes and confirm the hopes of its friends.













